

THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.

NO. XV

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MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY:—THE CHEVALIER SIGISMOND DE NEUKOMM.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN FOR THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.]

THE CHEVALIER SIGISMOND DE NEUKOMM was born at Salzburg, in Tyrol, July 10th, 1778. As early as in his sixth year, he showed a decided talent for music. His teacher was the skilful organist Weissauer, of Salzburg; under whose instruction he very soon made such progress, that he was able to assist him in his vocation. He, moreover, induced him, from his earliest youth, to practice not only the common stringed instruments, but also most of the wind instruments, including the brass ones; some of them to a considerable extent; so that on the flute, for instance, he could undertake to play a Concerto. This practical knowledge of instruments was of the greatest use to him in after life; and we would advise all those, who aspire to composition, to acquire it early.

In his fifteenth year, Neukomm was appointed organist to the university. His father, a man of literary attainments, and first teacher of the central normal school, carefully superintended his son's classical as well as musical education. Michael Haydn, who was a relative of the family, instructed him in composition, and often allowed him to take his place at the organ of the court chapel.

In his eighteenth year, he was appointed *Correpetitor* of the opera at the court theatre; and was, by this appointment, confirmed in the resolution of devoting himself altogether to the art of music.

After having completed the course of mathematical and philosophical studies in the university of his native place, he went, in the year 1798, to Vienna; and was received by Joseph Haydn as his pupil, at the recommendation of his brother, by whom he was thenceforward treated as his son. He enjoyed this enviable opportunity for the cultivation of his genius till the year 1800, when he went to St. Petersburg; where he very soon got the place of chapel-master and director of the opera at the Imperial German Theatre. After a few years, however, he was obliged to resign this office, on account of a severe sickness, caused by the death of his father; and from this time, he devoted himself altogether to composing. In 1807, he was made a member of the Academy of Music, at Stockholm: and in 1808, of the Philharmonic Society of St. Petersburg. While in the latter city, he often brought out new compositions of his own; but did not publish any, until the year 1808, when Joseph Haydn and other connoisseurs persuaded him to it. In 1809, he went to Paris, where he lived without any office; devoting himself entirely to the arts and sciences, and to intimate social intercourse with such men as Cherubini, Grétry and Cuvier; as also with prince Talleyrand: to whom he was introduced by his patroness, the princess of Lothringen-Vaudémont; and who not only took him into his house, and to his table, but considered him altogether as a member of his family.

In 1814, Neukomm accompanied this prince to the Congress of Vienna; where his vocal *Requiem* was performed, at the commemoration of the death of Louis XVI., in St. Stephen's church, in presence of the assembled monarchs, by a choir of three hundred singers. In 1815, Louis XVIII. created him knight of the "legion of honor," and raised him to the rank of the nobility; he having returned after the congress with prince Talleyrand to Paris. In 1816, he accompanied the duke of Luxembourg, ambassador extraordinary, to Rio de Janeiro. His letters of recommendation procured him a favorable reception from the prime minister, Count da Barca, and an introduction to the king [of Portugal], who gave him a rich pension. This pension he however voluntarily resigned, at the outbreak of the revolution in 1821, and followed the king to Lisbon; where he was made knight of the order of Christ, and of

that of *da Conceicao*. In October of the same year, he returned to Paris; taking up his abode, as formerly, with prince Talleyrand. From Paris, he journeyed, in 1826, through Italy; in 1827, to Belgium and Holland; in 1829, to England and Scotland; where he met with a distinguished reception from Sir Walter Scott, and other eminent literary and musical gentlemen.

In 1830, he accompanied prince Talleyrand again to England; which he has, since that time, made his home; finding a sphere of activity as pleasant as it is honorable, in this country which does so much for the cause of music. The autumn and winter months, when there is no musical life in England, he generally spent in visits to the continent. In this way, in 1832, he came to Berlin, Leipsic and Dresden; in 1833 and 1834, he made another journey to Italy; in 1834, he visited the south of France, from whence he went over to Algiers, and other places of northern Africa. In 1836, he intended to visit North America; and to travel a year in this country, to observe its wonderfully rapid development. He had already taken passage in a Liverpool packet, when an attack of fever forced him to abandon his plan. He soon recovered his health, under the kind care of a pleasant family in Manchester, where he was treated with the most intimate friendship. His active spirit did not allow him a long rest: he made a journey to southern Germany, from whence he returned to his old friend, Talleyrand; with whom he stayed a very considerable time.

We thus see that Neukomm's life has been very rich in external variety; no other artist being able to boast of such extensive travels, and of so intimate an acquaintance with the most eminent men of his age. And yet he has not neglected his art; but, by a wise economy of his time, he has been enabled to raise the number of his compositions to an astonishing height. He has a thematic catalogue of them, since his twenty-fifth year; containing the titles of five hundred and twenty-four vocal compositions, (among which are sixty-seven psalms in different languages); and two-hundred and nineteen instrumental ones; but many pieces, composed during his travels, he has not inserted.

He has been blamed for composing too much in the style of the ancient writers; but he himself looks upon this rather as praise than otherwise, feeling great respect for Palestrina and all the old masters of his time, and an enthusiastic partiality for the mighty Handel, whose greatness he learned fully to appreciate only in England.

In reviewing his enviable career, affording him such unexampled opportunities for observation, which his rich mind conscientiously improved, we can but wish that he would open the treasures of his experience, and publish his memoirs.

Among his innumerable compositions, the best are, the *Requiem*, mentioned above; a *Stabat Mater*; and the Cantata, the *Easter Morn*. His most distinguishing characteristics as a composer are, an elevated simplicity; a boldness of ideas, combined with depth of feeling; clearness and richness in his modulations; and above all, melody beautifully adapted to the words, pure, noble and affecting. All his works bespeak the man of genius and thorough knowledge. He has written in many of the different styles of music, but the serious style of church music seems best to suit both his inclination and the bent of his genius.

PRESENT STATE OF MUSICAL ÆSTHETICS.

SCIENCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL IN MUSIC.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE PARIS GAZETTE MUSICALE.]

[Continued from page 216.]

Among the opponents of Kant, John Augustus Eberhard is one who has treated of music with a scientific development. His *Manual of Æsthetics for instructed Readers*,* contains, in the third volume, a long article on the theory of the beautiful in this art (p. 66 to 123.) His fundamental principle is, that man has a consciousness of a complete combination of the elements of music, the relations of which, good or bad, it determines by a sentiment which experience develops. According to his classification, these elements are ranged in this order, *rhythm, movement, tone* (quality of sound), *melody and harmony*.

This classification is sufficient to show that Eberhard has bent his researches more to the manner in which the various parts of the art act upon men who are destitute of a knowledge of it, than to the discovery of the absolute principle of the art in itself, and to the ideal conception which we are able to have of its unity. Eberhard,

* *Handbuch der Æsthetik für gebildete Leser aus allen Ständen.* Halle, 4 parts, in 8vo. 1808—1820.

saw, indeed, that the parts of music which act with most force upon men least instructed in this art, are rhythm and movement, next sound, then at length song or melody, and in the last place harmony. Unfortunately, these considerations, although founded in reality, cannot lead to a fundamental doctrine of the beautiful, and are of value in the science only as things gathered from experience, whatever care their author has taken to connect them with the general sentiment which we have of beauty.

A very eloquent passage of Eberhard's book, upon harmony (p. 77), which he makes to spring from the very bosom of the divinity, serves as an introduction to the best part of this author's labor, concerning the *æsthetics* of music. This part contains some good observations upon tone, the intervals and their proportions, but merely observations on details, which do not rest upon any fundamental theory of this important part of the art. One of Eberhard's best ideas is, the having considered the history of this art as inseparable from its *æsthetical* theory. On the whole, though we do not find in his work a transcendental doctrine of what constitutes beauty in music, it must be confessed that he has well analyzed the modes of moral action of each of the parts of this art.

After the school of Kant, or rather, while this and its adversaries were debating for and against the doctrine of criticism, Fichte came in with his inflexible theories, the origin of which was indeed found in the philosophy of his illustrious predecessor, but in this philosophy developed in its most rigorous idealistic relations. Nothing is less poetic than the doctrine of Fichte; nothing less calculated to lead to the knowledge of artistical beauty. At first sight, one would think that he was going to show us how the *æsthetical* idea manifests itself in us *a priori*, and how this idea is identical with the manifestation of the beautiful in the external world. This would be a great step towards the knowledge of absolute beauty, or rather the solution of the whole question. There exists, says he, in space and time, a living force, a free and unlimited activity, which acts and reacts. In its first movement, it is the *I* properly so called; in its returning movement, it is the *non-I*; at the point of equilibrium, it is *consciousness*. The *I* is that which is because it is. But whence comes the *non-I*? Whence proceeds the action of the *non-I* upon the *I*? This is what we do not know, says Fichte; it is what we shall never know. Sensibility alone makes the external world appear to us as active; we have a consciousness

of it, but not an absolute consciousness (see the *Fundamental Principles of the doctrine of science*, by Fichte.)* It results from these considerations, that we may have the sentiment of exterior beauty, but not know it in itself. If we establish theories of it, they are purely ideal.

The reaction which made itself felt against the rigorous and little consoling principles of Fichte's philosophy, at the appearance of that of Schelling, brought back the mind towards objects more poetical, and restored to the imagination a bolder action. The pretension of this latter to find in every thing the principle of the absolute in the identity of the subjective and the objective, of the *I* and the *non-I*, of the real and the ideal, of knowledge and existence, of unity and plurality, of form and matter; this pretension, I say, sustained by the scientific form of the system, led away many distinguished men into the new course which the celebrated author of this philosophy had just opened to them.

Unfortunately, in what concerns æsthetics, Schelling has only made the application of his principles as regards the arts of design (see in his *Philosophical Works*,† a discourse upon the relations of the arts of design with nature): it seems he has not dared to touch the slippery ground of absolute beauty in an art which has no model to imitate in the external world.

Krug and Krause, the former a declared adversary of the philosophy of Schelling, the latter at first his pupil and admirer, afterwards his antagonist, have written something upon musical æsthetics, but have produced nothing that has advanced this branch of the science. Krug, in his general *Æsthetics*,‡ established, 1st, that the beautiful in the art of sounds, taken in the most general sense, is produced under two aspects: the first material, consisting in the relation of sounds in intonation, in intensity, in character, and in duration; in fine, in their succession, from which is melody; and in simultaneousness, from which is harmony: the second, intellectual and sentimental, resulting from form. According to him, the first kind of beauty constitutes the agreeable; it is that which pleases the sense of hearing; the second is the beautiful in itself; æsthetical beauty, absolute beauty. His conclusion is, that most

* *Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre*, Weimar, 1794, 8vo.

† *Philosophische Schriften*. 1 vol. 8vo. Landshut, 1809.

‡ *System der Theorischen Philosophie*, 3d edition. Königsberg, 1823 to 1830, 3 parts, 8vo. 3d part (*Æsthetics*), p. 331, &c.

men are more disposed to receive the impressions of the agreeable, or of material beauty, than to conceive the pure æsthetical beauty. With them, *the grand* consists in the power of sound and in the cadence of the rhythm: it is for this reason, says he, that military music pleases the people so much, whilst the *formal* beauty of compositions of a higher order escapes them.

The starting point of Krug was excellent. He had generalized the thought of Pythagoras with regard to the relations of sound, and had perceived the limits of the natural philosophy of the beautiful in music and of the beautiful purely æsthetic; but he has done nothing for the development of a doctrine according to these data; and this question, so difficult, of *formal* beauty, he has only pointed at.

Krause was a musician, and consequently had the advantage of being acquainted with the practice of the art which he wished to examine under its philosophical relations: nevertheless, what he has given upon the æsthetics of this art, in his *Sketch of the History of Music*,* is superficial.

The excessive difficulties, which surround the question of the absolute beautiful in music, have frightened the most exalted minds. John Paul, that writer of such an audacious originality, that man so happy in multitudes of sketches, has made a large book on æsthetics; but he has meddled with nothing but poetry. Hegel, that last great reformer of philosophy, did not write down the lessons which he gave upon this branch of the science; but his disciples, who have raised to his glory the literary monument of his complete works, have supplied this gap: and Mr. Hotho, one of them, has given, following the course of his master, a voluminous treatise of æsthetics, making the tenth volume of the collection.† Now, in this work, poetry, architecture, and the other arts, are separately analyzed, according to the exposition of the general principles; but we do not find a word concerning music.

Among the most modern authors, who have written upon the theory of the beautiful in the arts, in a general manner, we notice, Messrs. John Baptiste Talia,‡ L. Pasquali,§ C. Seidel,|| G. A. Bur-

* *Darstellungen aus der Geschichte der Musik*. Göttingen, 1827. 8vo.

† *G. W. Fr. Hegel's Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, Herausgegeben Von D. H. G. Hotho. Berlin, 1835-37. 2 vols. 8vo.

‡ *D. Gio. Batt. Talia, Saggio di Estetica Venezia*. 1822. 8vo.

§ *L. Pasquali, Istituzioni di Estetica*. Padua, 1827. 2 vols. 8vo.

|| *C. Seidel, Beiträge zur allgemeinen Theorie und Geschichte der schönen Künste*. Magdeburg, 1825-28. 2 vols. 8vo.

ger,* Chr. Herm. Weisse,† and P. Lichtenthal.‡ It is probable that several among them have not neglected music, and that we owe to them some researches upon beauty with relation to this art; but their books have not yet reached me, and I am unable to speak of them at present. They will be the object of a separate analysis, which will complete this task.

FÉTIS.

[To be continued.]

 REVIEW.

The London and Westminster Review. April—July, 1839.
Article III. *The Pianoforte.*

There is an uncommonly well written article in the above periodical, on the development of the art of pianoforte-playing. We have derived great pleasure from the perusal of it, and recommend it to the attention of our readers. The author manifests great knowledge not only of the instrument itself, but also of the composers for it, and their productions. He also shows himself conversant with musical literature; and the reader will derive much instruction from the article, both in a historical and critical point of view. His classification and arrangement of the different composers for the pianoforte, are managed with that correctness and clearness, which show a mind fully acquainted with the subject. We shall endeavor to give our readers an analysis of the article.

The author begins with comparing the present taste in music, and the present state of its cultivation, with that of the times of queen Elizabeth, much to the disparagement of our own days. In former times music was "cherished at English firesides as a valued guest," and "he was not esteemed a 'compleat gentleman,' who could not sing at sight his part in a madrigal." Even in the stern times of Cromwell, when every thing savoring of catholicism was swept away, music escaped the general wreck, and continued to be

* G. A. Burger's *Lechbuch der Æsthetik*. Herausgegeben V. K. V. Reinhardt. Berlin, 1825. 2 vols. 8vo.

† Chr. Herm. Weisse *System der Æsthetik als Wissenschaft der Idee der Schöuheit*. Leipsic, 1830. 2 vols. 8vo.

‡ P. Lichtenthal *Estatica ossia doctrina del bello, e delle belle arti*. Milan, 1831. 1 vol. 8vo.

"taken up, both with profit and delight, in recreating and composing their travailed spirits, with its solemn and divine harmonies." Amateurs then devoted study to the art; so that it not only gave them sensual pleasure, charming their ears with its sweet tones; but they learned to appreciate the author's harmonical effects, and thus derived intellectual gratification from their musical pastimes. How different is the case at present. Music, in England, "is now permitted to exhibit its antics as a paid juggler." It is "esteemed but as a toy, to be worn or laid by, as fashion pleases." "For the last hundred years, while every English girl has been tormented into an aimless knowledge of the practical difficulties of the pianoforte, any one of her brothers, who took up the science, or addicted himself to any instrument whatever, or showed the smallest zeal for the art, beyond what was implied in his haunting the *coulisses* of British and foreign theatres, purse in hand—run no small risk of being set aside as a 'Frenchified trifler' by his learned brothers, and those in authority,—was certain to be laughed at as an effeminate 'milk-sop' by his brethren of the Fives Court, and the wine party, the Yatch Club, and the — Hounds!"

Still, there indeed appear, at the present time, "some signs of a disposition to restore music to its proper place, by cultivating it intellectually and not sensually." "There is no sign of the times fuller of promise, than the unanimous *encores* bestowed upon the fugues, and preludes, and fantasias of Bach, when recently performed in London by Moscheles, and in Birmingham by Mendelssohn." The reviewer thinks that "the amount of these signs should be determined, and their development assisted as far as possible." He then gives his reasons for writing on the pianoforte:

"In treating of the pianoforte, in attempting to sketch its history, and its capabilities—offering a few brief notices of those masters whose performances have given it new powers, and whose compositions have either founded or sustained its different schools—and separating the legitimate from the illegitimate, the ephemeral from the permanent, the true, in short, from the false—the reviewer is offering the largest contribution in his power to the advancement of chamber music. For in England, where the national character is solitary rather than sociable, and its reserve is strangely mixed up with an impatience of drudgery and research—where the physical facility of throat and finger seems to be denied, such as makes the Italian street-singer vocalize without knowing it, and the German

tavern-musician place his hands on the bow or the keys in a correct position—the pianoforte will always be the instrument most largely in favor. To play respectably a solo on the violin or violoncello requires a devotion of labor and a self-renunciation, which is not common; while a quartett implies, beyond this, a sedulous union of sundry personages submitting themselves to one presiding head. The flute, it is beginning to be admitted, is so poor an instrument, as to be placed almost out of the reach of the higher order of music save in orchestral concert."

He then goes on with the history of the instrument:

"Of the origin of the pianoforte—the history of its wood and wire—a few words must be said. The head of the family was, perhaps, the Psaltery; which, according to Mr. Hogarth, 'consisted of a square box, of small depth, over which was stretched a sounding-board of fir, and on this sounding-board were stretched a set of strings of steel and brass, tuned to the notes of the scale.' The psaltery being played upon with two little rods, was substantially the same as the present street dulcimer. * * * * As time wore on, the little rods were discarded, keys were affixed, and the psaltery became a clavichord, the feeble and tinkling grandfather of the pianoforte. Contemporary with the clavichord, was the virginal, its own cousin, and progenitor of the larger and more complete harpsichord. * * * Early in the eighteenth century, the little octave spinnet, sometimes in its most ancient and triangular form, 'was used to accompany singing in private houses throughout Italy.' * * * The high esteem in which harpsichords were held from the first, may be gathered from the scull and music books which Salvator Rosa (that fiery and versatile genius) condescended to paint on the case of his instrument. * * * But the instrument's worthiest claim to modern respect lies in the fact of its increased capabilities and powers of effect having called forth the exquisite *Passacaglias* and *Sarabandas* and fugues and *Allemandes* of Scarlatti."

Such is a brief history of the progress of discovery, which has finally resulted in the present pianoforte; which, however, has received numberless improvements since its first invention, and is doubtless destined to receive many more. From the history of the instrument itself, the reviewer is led to some account of the eminent composers for it, whom he distinguished into five classes or eras; which we digest and bring together in the following form:

1. The *solid, harmonic* school, of the first composers, with Sebastian Bach at their head.

2. The *expressive, melodic* school, at the head of which is Mozart.

3. The school of *mere execution*, of *finger music*, brought out by Kalkbrenner.

4. The school of genius, availing itself of all the former schools, for working up its own distinct and original conceptions. The first of this school, chronologically, was Clementi.

5. The *marvellous or hyper-romantic* school, of which Sigismond Thalberg was the first.

We shall follow the reviewer through his notices of these five schools and their principal composers.

(To be continued.)

THE LATE MUSICAL SEASON.

[Continued from page 222.]

In the article in our last number under the above title, we made some remarks on the introduction of singing into the public schools, and the increased interest in instrumental music among our amateurs, as circumstances showing an advance in the general taste for and interest in music. We shall now give a few remarks, more particularly relating to the musical performances which were given during the winter, beginning with the three principal musical Societies.

The Handel and Haydn Society naturally takes precedence, not only as being the oldest institution, but as possessing the most independent means for pursuing its objects. They have brought out nothing new, but have manifested their disposition to gratify the public, by engaging the best orchestra that was to be obtained in the city. We shall also give them credit for the same good intention, in placing at their head one of the two gentlemen, whose knowledge of the science, and whose skill as artists, place them acknowledgedly beyond the reach of comparison with any others we have among us. And though this appointment was not attended with the success they had anticipated; yet we hope they will not be deterred thereby from electing a professional gentleman here-

after, for we think that this Society ought to be under the direction of the best talent we have among us. We would suggest to the Society the expediency of establishing the office of Conductor, as distinct from that of President. We think it would be productive of many advantages to the Society. We have no native American who is as well qualified to fill the office of Conductor as some of our foreign professors; and yet, many reasons suggest themselves, why it would be better to have a native Bostonian for the President of the Society. If these duties, therefore, were divided, we think the Society would be the gainer. We have spoken of the principal performances of this Society in a former number, and it is unnecessary to go into farther particulars. Suffice it to say, that we hope their success during the latter part of the season, will stimulate them to higher efforts for improvement.

We have also detailed, from time to time, the steps which the Boston Academy of Music have taken during the past season, for the advancement of the art. As regards this institution, its usefulness arises more from its general influence on public opinion in favor of music and musical cultivation, than from its musical performances. The Academy, not being equally independent in regard to its means as the Handel and Haydn Society, found an orchestra too expensive, and therefore changed their plan at the commencement of the last season. They chose music of a lighter character, than formerly; but soon found that Glees sung in Chorus, and oftentimes connected with insipid or unmeaning words, were insufficient to sustain the interest of their concerts; and they therefore returned to music more weighty in its character. The most important pieces, however, which they took up, such as the *Power of Song* and the *Harmony of the Spheres*, cannot be performed with their proper effect, without an orchestra; and we hope that a good one will be put in requisition by the Academy another season.

It is matter of surprise to us, as well as to others, that the Academy, which has such able professors in its service, does not take measures to get up an orchestra of its own. This ought to have been one of their first objects. They must be aware, that if they wish to advance the art, or to operate with any good degree of efficiency and permanence upon public taste, it is equally necessary to cultivate instrumental as vocal music; nay, much more so: because the former is at present in a lower condition among us. None of our other institutions have the means for effecting this,

which the Academy possesses. It ought to have a number of young men in constant training; and in this way, it would soon have a very efficient orchestra, and would be able to keep it up.

We feel some hesitation in speaking of the Musical Institute, as we have had but little opportunity to attend their performances or observe their operations. We have always regretted that they should have separated from the Handel and Haydn Society, since any one can see that there is not enough of either musical talent or musical taste among us, to make rivalry useful or desirable. We much more need the union and concentration of all our forces for one purpose. It must, however, be said in favor of the Institute, that there appears to be a good degree of good management in it. They seem to go quietly to work, relying on their own means, and doing the best which those means enable them; which is so far commendable. We cannot, however, say the same of all their management. That they should have brought out *Joseph and his Brethren*, as an Oratorio, when it is nothing else than a serious Opera, is in our opinion a great mistake, and much to be regretted. It is following the public taste, and not leading it; it is indulging and encouraging it in that direction to which it is already but too prone, namely, to what is light and frivolous. It is misleading the public, in a manner, for which they will not thank the Institute, when they shall have learned better. On the contrary, it will tend to prejudice them against it. The same remarks apply to the *Skeptic*, which the Institute brought out the previous season, and in which the discrepancy in expression between the words and the music was truly horrible: indeed, its character in this respect was such, as ought to take away from it all right and title to the name of Oratorio, Opera, or any other known name appropriated to a musical composition. It ought to be one of the most important objects of such a society, to elevate music in the public regard, and to raise the standard of public taste; but by thus sailing under false colors, the tendency will be the opposite.

By these remarks on the name under which *Joseph and his Brethren* was brought out, we cannot be understood as saying anything in detraction from the merits of the work: on the contrary, it is a fine composition. But the line between the Oratorio and the Opera is distinctly drawn, and care should be taken to keep it distinct. It is not the subject alone, which makes an Oratorio, but the manner of treating it. The same is true of the Opera, and the

manner of treatment in the two is wholly different. Though the subject of Joseph and his Brethren is taken from the Bible, it is treated by the author as a historical drama, and by the composer as a serious opera. The case is the same with Rossini's *Moses in Egypt*.

We commend the Institute for having brought out the *Hymn of the Seasons*; and we hope they will continue to bring forward other music of home-manufacture, provided they can find that which is worth it; as it will tend to encourage the art among us.

We have already spoken of the private amateur concerts, as an interesting feature in the musical character of the past season. Although they showed the art of instrumental music to be still in its infancy; although they exhibited an undue preponderance of wind instruments, in the estimation of amateurs, especially the flute, (which is an instrument very limited in its power and variety of expression), yet we confidently hope and expect that they will lead to a more extensive cultivation of stringed instruments among them.

Of professional concerts, those of our two military bands may be mentioned, as showing how gaudy the public taste for music still is, since these were the best supported of the whole season. Several distinguished performers have given very pleasing and interesting concerts, among whom may be mentioned Madame Caradori Allan; Miss Shirreff, Wilson, and Seguin; Signor de Begnis; and Mr. Dempster. We fear, however, that these exhibitions do not have a tendency to forward the art among us; but, on the contrary, that they tend to lead our amateurs from the right path. Airs and songs suitable for parlor music, are generally selected for these concerts; and though they afford great satisfaction and delight, yet they are not heard often enough to enable one to appreciate the real excellence with which they are executed, and to say wherein it lies. Still, however, our amateurs will take these same songs, and after a few attempts to imitate the style and manner in which they have heard them sung, are too apt to fall in with the opinions expressed by some of their injudicious friends, that they sing them as well as the artists they are trying to imitate. They thus adopt a sort of mannerism, in which there is neither taste nor expression, and call it good singing. We would caution amateurs against listening to any such opinions; for, the moment they do, there is an end to their improvement. Let them constantly keep in mind,

that excellence in anything is gained only by careful study and constant practice. If a few of them would do this, we should soon have better singers than we now have.

Of instrumental performers, we have had but one worthy of notice, Master St. Luke, of whom we have spoken before. We wish more of the truly distinguished instrumental performers would come among us; and they would, if they were better patronized here. There are and have been, in our neighboring city of New York, excellent performers on the Pianoforte, such as Schlesinger, Scharfenberg, and others; and also on other instruments: why cannot some of them be induced to come to Boston and give a few concerts?

We come, last of all, to the theatre, where we have had a few good singers and good operas: but the true idea of the opera is as yet very little developed here, and they have therefore comparatively little influence on the public taste. This state of things also exerts a reciprocal influence upon the style and manner in which they are got up; so that there is less hope of improvement.

From the foregoing remarks, it will appear, that there has been more of life than usual in the musical world with us during the last season; and that the prospect is that the march will be onward: with how much real benefit to the art, or to the public taste, time alone must determine.

CONCERTS AT PORTLAND.

By the politeness of a subscriber, we have been favored with a few Portland papers, of June 26th, from which we learn that the Portland Sacred Music Society had advertised that they would perform Neukomm's Oratorio of David, on the evenings of June 25th, 26th, and 28th, and would give a Miscellaneous Concert on the 27th, as a benefit to their conductor, Mr. Williamson. The Society had procured an "efficient orchestra;" and from what we have heard of their former performances, we have no doubt of their ability to give the Oratorio in a highly creditable manner. We have seen no remarks upon any of these performances, except the first, viz. that of June 25th. Two of the papers speak of it in terms of unqualified praise; but a third finds some faults. They all, however, concur in censuring the public, for allowing so good a performance to go off with so thin an attendance. From this we infer that our Portland friends are not exempt from their share of that neglect, to which the art seems doomed,

the world over. We hope, however, that they were well indemnified on the other evenings.

Mr. Dempster also gave concerts in Portland, about the same period.

BOSTON ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

In the month of August, 1834, a course of Lectures was delivered by the Professors in the Boston Academy of Music, to teachers of singing schools and others, designed to illustrate the Pestalozzian method of teaching vocal music in classes, as contained in the Manual of Instruction, then recently published by the Academy. These Lectures have since been repeated annually to increased numbers, with some additional exercises. The members of previous classes usually attend in considerable numbers; and for two or three years past, the time which was not occupied by the exercises of the class, has been spent by the whole body under a separate organization, called the Musical Convention. The last year, the class consisted of fifty-nine persons, and the Convention, of one hundred and thirty-nine. The following is the Academy's advertisement for the present year.

Teacher's Class for 1839.

"A Course of Instruction to Teachers of Vocal Music will commence on Tuesday, August 20, at 10 o'clock, A. M., and will be continued daily, for ten days, as follows, viz.:

1. Lectures on the Elementary Principles of Music.
2. Exercises in singing, designed to improve the taste, and promote a correct manner of performance in sacred and secular music.
3. Rudiments of Harmony and Thorough Bass.
4. Meetings of the class for the discussion of musical subjects.
5. It is expected, also, that there will be public performances of music by the Class.

The whole course will be adapted to the wants of teachers of Singing Schools, consisting of either adult or juvenile classes; or for such teachers of Common Schools, male or female, as are desirous of introducing music as a regular branch of instruction.

Terms as follows:—Admittance to all, except the Lectures on Thorough Bass—Five dollars for Gentlemen, and two dollars and fifty cents for Ladies.

Admittance to Lectures on Thorough Bass, two dollars and fifty cents for Gentlemen, and one dollar and twenty-five cents for Ladies.

Members of previous classes are invited to attend all the Lectures, with the privilege, also, of introducing a Lady, without charge.

Ladies and Gentlemen, who intend to join this class, are particularly desired to be present at the first meeting—the first lessons being essential to a clear understanding of the system.

Tickets of admission may be obtained at the Bookstore of Messrs. Perkins & Marvin, No. 114 Washington Street.

GEORGE WM. GORDON, *Secretary.*"